



## **Regional Service Council Minutes**

### **Region #**

**Meeting Date:** March 20, 2007

**Meeting Location:** Bartholomew County DCS Conference Room

**Council Members Present:** Mark Loyd, Dennis Carmichael, Helen Jackson, Jack Tandy, Shana Bolden, Laura Gentry, Susie Hodnett, and Ruth Alewine

**Council Members Absent:** Heather Mollo, LaDonna Simpson and Cindy Doyle-Winslow

**Others In Attendance:** Heather Barrett, The Villages; Kevin Roach, Youth Connections; Joan Bullman, Family Services; Mary McKinney, Family Services; Chris Hackias, Three Springs; Dawn Wilson, DCS; Stephenie Hootman, Gibault; Emily Wims, Gibault; Karla Davis, CPCS; Penny Pitcock, DSA; Kris Meltzer, DCS; Shaye Isaacs, Wernle; Julie Stewart, Childrens' Bureau; Sarah Sullivan, Fountain Consulting.

### **Meeting Minutes**

**Meeting Called to Order at:** 8:40 am

1. Ruthi explained that she would like to have Shana Bolden, Acting Director in Jennings County replace Mike Williams during the time he is deployed. Motion by Dennis to accept Shana's appointment, second by Helen; motion passed.
2. Ruthi updated RSC on Dr. Toni Laskey training set for April 18. It will be at the Intelliplex in Shelby County, with registration beginning at 8:00 and actual program beginning at 8:30. We will break for "lunch on your own" and resume the presentation after that. Program will last until 4:30. The training is intended for Law Enforcement, Medical personnel and CPS staff. We have space for 150 persons and have registrations for 90 to date.
3. CWS funds:  
Helen had brought a request to last month's meeting from Family Services, Inc., to change the way in which the funds they were allocated could be spent. Their original proposal had been to serve only children in the Taylorsville School Corp., but they now believe they will not be able to

utilize all the funds unless they are able to serve some children outside of that school district. They requested they be allowed to utilize 25% of their funds (\$9,212.50) for children who are outside the school system and do not have medical insurance coverage. At last month's meeting Heather had asked if this request could be remanded to the committee in Bartholomew County that had evaluated all the CWS proposals and made recommendations to the RSC. That committee reviewed the request during the intervening time between RSC meetings and they now recommend we allow this change in usage.

Laura brought a proposal for ACT Services in Johnson County. Johnson had funded them from their own CWS allocation, but the amount granted is not enough to sustain the program. Childrens' Bureau, the agency who runs ACT Services, applied for a portion of the CWS "hold back" dollars that were retained by the State office of DCS. That office notified Laura and Ruthi that they had set aside \$50, 585 for this service. The Council must approve the request and the minutes of the meeting, showing the approval, must be sent to the State contact by March 23, 2007, in order for the money to be released to Johnson County DCS.

Motion by Dennis to approve both funding requests and to accept the funds from the State for Act Services; second by Jack; motion passed

4. Penny Pitcock, our representative from Dodson, Shively & Associates, the IV-B Coordinator for our Region, was present to explain some changes that have occurred with the Intensive Family Preservation and Reunification Services programs and to make sure that the RSC was in favor of changing the provider for that service for three of the five counties in the Region. Lifeline was selected by Johnson, Shelby and Bartholomew counties for these services, but they have recently reported to Laura that they do not have their staff trained and cannot begin services. Bethany Christian Services (BCS) had also proposed to provide this service in our Region. BCS has provided this service in Marion County for about 12 years. They have trained staff that are available to begin in our Region and because they already are contracted by other Regions in the state, our counties can be added onto their contract by a fairly simple process. Motion by Jack to approve the change of providers for the three counties, second by Mark; motion passed.

5. Discussion on Strategic Plan initiatives: Dennis and Heather have talked over the telephone about the initiatives they are working on pertaining to

evaluation of programs/services and will be meeting in the future to formalize their ideas. Helen has made contact with Tara Treatment Center in Johnson county to set a meeting so that work can begin on expanding substance abuse treatment services and she and Cindy have talked over the telephone about this; Susie is also involved in this group and Mike had agreed to work on this initiative before he left—Shana was asked if she would work with this group and she agreed. Jack reported that he and LaDonna had talked about their initiatives involving work in the area of foster parenting; Laura is also a part of that initiative.

6. Karla updated us on the Community Partners program (CPCS.) She handed out the monthly financial report, the tracking sheet that shows all referrals made to date, a two-page report of hours spent with each referral and a sheet that explained outcomes for this program that Childrens' Bureau will use as a part of their Continuous Quality Improvement process they pursue with all their programming/services.

Karla said she now has three liaisons working in the five counties. First interviews have been done for the fourth liaison and she is arranging for the second interview of one of the candidates. This liaison would serve Johnson County and we will then have one primary liaison for each county, with Karla continuing to handle the families referred in Bartholomew.

The Steering Committee is comprised of a group of people that Karla described as interested, involved and passionate about seeing the program succeed. They recently discussed the length of time a case should be kept open and have a recommendation for the RSC. The Service Standards for the program state the case may remain open for 4 months or until the family goals are met. CPCS in some Regions are closing cases as soon as the 3 goals of the family are met—even if that means the case is only open for one week. Region 14 is the pilot region for the data collection software the State is using for CPCS—it is the one used by the Healthy Families programs but is called Partnertude for this program. That system only allows a family to set three goals—if those are met, it is not possible to add more goals for a family. Rather, they must have their case closed and open a new referral to work on more goals. The Steering Committee recommends that Region 14 keep cases open for a 4-month period and if the family has not yet met their goals by that time that the service be extended to a maximum of 6 months. In discussion by RSC members it was felt that the Steering Committee should have the authority to make those decisions and that the RSC does not need to micromanage the Committee.

Karla has been meeting with various entities in each county, including school in Shelby and Bartholomew County, explaining how the program works and agreeing to sit on panels in those two counties that work with at-risk families. She has told the schools that she can accept immediate referrals from them, if the need arises.

Karla is surprised that she has not received as many DCS referrals as she had anticipated. She will make herself available to meet with any county staff as needed so they understand the referral process and the appropriate families for referral. She wants to be sure that DCS does not get left out.

7. Ruthi gave information about one part of the DCS legislative package: Senate Bill 328 addresses the RSC and Early Intervention Plan (EIP) teams. EIP is in Indiana statute and is the body that plans the spending of county-funded early intervention services. The RSC is a body created by DCS to plan for the distribution of federal and state funds for child welfare services. This bill, if passed, would eliminate the EIP and replace it with the RSC. There would be changes in membership and responsibilities of the current RSC to allow for all child welfare funding to be planned for and spent through the RSC.

Dennis suggested that the State do a survey of current RSC members to ask them what they think works well and does not work well with the RSCs and to evaluate how they are actually working in the Regions. Ruthi said she would pass along this suggestion to the State.

**Next Meeting Date, Location and Time:** May 15, 2007, Bartholomew County DCS, 8:30 am

**Meeting Adjourned at:** 10:00 am